

Rabbit meat has been enjoyed by people around the world for generations. Since it is becoming quite popular with Canadians, Ontario is producing more top quality rabbit meat.

What It's Like . . .

Raw rabbit meat is a fresh pink color. It has no skin covering and no fat layer when packaged for retail sale. The cooked meat is fine-grained, delicately flavored and light in color, making it suitable for use in many recipes. Low in fat, rabbit meat is an excellent source of high quality protein.

How It's Sold . . .

Most domestic rabbits sold in Ontario weigh between 2 and 3 pounds dressed for market. These young animals are referred to as fryers. Animals over 3 pounds are sold as roasters. The meat of fryers is very tender and is suitable for braising, broiling, frying, roasting and barbecuing.

Where It Can Be Purchased . . .

Rabbit meat is available from specialty meat stores and some supermarkets. Ask the butcher to order it about a week in advance if he doesn't carry it regularly.

How It's Cut . . .

The butcher will usually agree to cut the rabbit carcass into serving pieces. If you prefer to cut your own, follow this diagram:



SHOULDER AND RIB

LOIN OR BACK

LEG

Rabbit Cooked in Other Ways . . .

TO FRY Dry rabbit pieces well. Coat in seasoned flour. Fry gently in a 50/50 oil-butter mixture (about 1/4 cup for 1 rabbit) for 15 to 20 minutes on each side or until cooked through.

TO BROIL Lay rabbit pieces on a broiler rack 4 to 6 inches from the broiler element. Baste with butter; broil 15 minutes on each side.

TO BARBECUE Wrap bacon strips around rabbit pieces. Secure with toothpicks. Barbecue 7 inches from hot coals for 35 to 40 minutes. Turn occasionally for even cooking.

TO ROAST Stuff rabbit with a favorite stuffing, about 2 cups. Lay bacon strips over rabbit, place on a rack in a roaster and add a little water (for added moistness. Cook uncovered at 190°C (375°F) for about 1-1/2 hours (for a 2-1/2 to 3 lb rabbit) or until done.

Some More Ideas for Rabbit . . .

TASTY STUFFING FOR ROAST RABBIT

Melt 1 tbsp butter in skillet. Brown 1/4 cup chopped yellow cooking onion and 1/4 cup chopped celery. Combine onion and celery with 2 cups cooked, mashed potatoes, 2 tbsp butter, 1/2 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp pepper, 1/4 tsp thyme and 1/8 tsp dill weed. Stuff rabbit with mixture, secure with string or skewers and cover with 6 bacon strips. Place in roasting pan, on rack. Pour 1 cup water into pan. Roast.

SANDWICH/SALAD IDEA

Thoroughly combine 2 cups chopped cooked rabbit (1 fryer rabbit), 2 tbsp chopped yellow cooking onion, 2 tbsp chopped celery, 2 tbsp sweet pickle relish, 1/3 cup mayonnaise, 1/4 tsp salt, 1/8 tsp pepper and 1/8 tsp curry powder (optional).

For sandwich Use 1/3 cup prepared filling for each sandwich. Makes 6 sandwiches.

For salad Use 1/2 cup prepared filling for each serving. Serve on lettuce or stuff in green pepper halves. Makes 4 servings.

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Rabbit Recipes — For Any Occasion . . .

RABBIT IN SPICY TOMATO SAUCE

- 1 fryer rabbit, cut in pieces
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 large yellow cooking onions, chopped
- 1 cup chopped parsley
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (13 oz) tomato paste
- 1 can (10 oz) consommé

Season rabbit with salt and cayenne pepper. In a heavy deep saucepan, brown rabbit in hot oil, about 10 minutes. Add onion, parsley and garlic. Cover and cook for 10 minutes. Combine tomato paste and consommé. Add to rabbit mixture. Cover. Simmer for 1-1/2 to 2 hours. Serve with noodles or wild rice. Makes 4 servings.

RABBIT ROLL

- 1 fryer rabbit, cut in pieces
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 medium yellow cooking onion, chopped
- 1 celery stick, thinly sliced
- 1 tbsp flour
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 2 cups biscuit mix prepared according to package directions for tea-biscuits
- 1 tbsp milk

Put rabbit in large saucepan, cover with boiling water and simmer for 1 hour. Cool, remove meat from bones and chop. Yields about 2 to 2-1/2 cups rabbit meat.

In frying pan, melt butter; cook onion and celery until tender. Stir in flour, add milk slowly, stirring constantly, and cook until thickened. Remove from heat. Add salt, pepper and cooked rabbit meat.

Roll prepared biscuit dough to a 10 x 10-inch square. Spread with rabbit mixture. Roll and place seam side down on greased baking sheet. Brush with milk. Bake at 200°C (400°F) for 35 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

BARBECUE-BAKED RABBIT

- 1 fryer rabbit, cut in pieces
- Sauce:
- 1/2 cup soy sauce
- juice from 1 lemon (1/4 cup)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1/4 tsp garlic salt
- 1/8 tsp thyme

Mix sauce ingredients. Marinate rabbit pieces in sauce in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.

Place rabbit and sauce in a baking dish. Roast, uncovered, at 190°C (375°F) for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Baste often. Makes 4 servings.

RABBIT PAPRIKA

- 1 fryer rabbit, cut in pieces
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 medium yellow cooking onions, chopped
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp vinegar
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tbsp flour
- 1 tsp paprika

Rub rabbit with salt and pepper. Melt butter in large heavy saucepan, add oil and brown rabbit pieces. Remove rabbit pieces. Cook onion in remaining butter-oil mixture until golden. Stir in 1 tsp paprika, vinegar, caraway seeds and water. Bring to boil. Add rabbit pieces, reduce heat and simmer, covered, over low heat for 1 hour. Remove rabbit pieces and keep hot. Blend sour cream, flour and remaining 1 tsp paprika. Slowly stir into simmering sauce and continue stirring until thick and smooth. Return rabbit pieces to sauce. Simmer 5 minutes, basting with sauce. Makes 4 servings.

Rabbit Recipes — For Those Special Times . . .

RABBIT WITH MUSTARD SAUCE

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| 1 fryer rabbit, cut in pieces | 1 beef-flavored bouillon cube |
| 1 tsp salt | 1 cup boiling water |
| 1/4 tsp pepper | 1/4 cup Ontario brandy |
| 1 tsp tarragon | 3/4 cup flour |
| 1 tbsp prepared Dijon mustard | 6 tbsp cold water |
| 2 tbsp butter | 1 tbsp prepared Dijon mustard |
| 2 tbsp vegetable oil | 1 tsp chopped parsley |

Combine salt, pepper, tarragon and 1 tbsp mustard. Spread on both sides of rabbit pieces. Melt butter in skillet. Add oil and brown rabbit pieces. Dissolve bouillon cube in boiling water. Add to skillet, add brandy. Cover skillet and simmer over low heat for 1 hour.

Remove rabbit to platter and keep warm. Pour 1 cup of cooking juices into small saucepan. Combine flour and water in jar with a tight fitting lid. Shake well. Stir into juices in saucepan. Cook over medium heat until thickened. Stir in remaining 1 tbsp mustard.

To serve, pour sauce over rabbit pieces. Garnish with parsley. Makes 4 servings.

PEACH RABBIT

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| 2 fryer rabbits, cut in pieces | 1 can (14 oz) Canada Choice peach slices |
| 2 tsp salt | 1/2 cup maple syrup |
| 1/2 tsp pepper | 1/2 tsp dry mustard |
| 3 tsp butter | 1/4 tsp ground ginger |
| 3 tsp vegetable oil | 1/4 tsp cinnamon |
| 1 medium yellow cooking onion, chopped | 2 tbsp cornstarch |
| | 2 tbsp water |

Rub salt and pepper on rabbit pieces. Melt butter in large skillet. Add oil and brown rabbit pieces. Remove rabbit pieces to large baking dish. Cook chopped onion in skillet until golden. Drain peach slices, reserving juice. Mix together reserved peach juice, chopped onion, maple syrup, dry mustard, ginger and cinnamon and pour over rabbit pieces. Cover and bake at 180°C (350°F) for 1 hour.

Remove rabbit to heat-proof platter, add peach slices and return to oven for 10 minutes more. Measure 1-1/2 cups of pan juices into small saucepan. Mix cornstarch and water until smooth. Add to pan juices. Cook and stir over medium heat until thickened.

To serve, pour sauce over rabbit and peaches. Makes 8 servings.